

To: Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee – Conservation & Development  
From: Amy Wynn, Executive Director, Northwest Connecticut Arts Council  
Date: February 11, 2014  
Re: Testimony in support of DECD/CT Office of the Arts and the State Budget

Co-Chairs and members of the Committee,

My name is Amy Wynn and I am the Executive Director of the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council, serving 25 towns, and I am also on the board of the Connecticut Arts Alliance and on DECD's Arts Council. **I urge you to support reinstating the \$2 million budget allocation for Arts Grants from DECD's Office of the Arts, and for reinstating the annual contribution to the State's Arts Endowment.**

We recognize the enormity of identifying solutions to the State's financial challenges. The arts and cultural sector has proven that it is a financial asset for the State's coffers. The State's recent Arts & Economic Prosperity study illustrated, once again, that **investing State dollars in the nonprofit arts and cultural industry pays back more than five and a half times in State revenues what the State provides in funding to the Arts – and those figures are quite conservative.**

The CT Arts & Economic Prosperity Study found that that the non-profit arts are a wise investment that provides a return on investment to the State. Specifically the study found that Connecticut's nonprofit arts and culture industry annually:

- **Generates \$653 million in total economic activity**
- **Supports 18,314 full-time equivalent local jobs**
- **Generates \$462.5 million in local household income to residents**
- **Delivers \$59.1 million in local and state government revenue**

**These impressive numbers are actually understated** due to less-than-a-100 percent response rate from Connecticut's arts and culture organizations (329 out of approximately 1,138 in CT responded).

**The last budget's reduction of the more than 10% cut was extremely debilitating to our sector.** There were several worthy cultural gems which have received funding in years past that did not last year, due to the extremely limiting funding and the efforts of the state to encourage innovations while at the same time provide operating support. These reductions are not only damaging to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations state-wide, but also reduce much needed State revenues, according to the recent study mentioned.

The Arts Endowment provides each qualified cultural organization meeting the criteria with some level of operating funding each year from the interest this fund generates. This is an important, although small, source of operating funds for cultural organizations. The applicant pool has been growing, but the fund has not received its annual state allocation for several years.

The \$2 million in arts grants is a drop in the bucket of the State budget, but it is a highly nourishing drop. Our industry does a lot with a little, so every dollar cut is felt deeply. Your previous support of arts funding is sincerely appreciated and we are proud to say not only has your support of the cultural industry been a wise investment financially, but it has contributed in so many ways to our State's quality

of life, the education of students, entrepreneurship in business, civic engagement, and democracy. However, **we are not actually producing all these benefits at the industry's full potential – there is so much more we could do with increased grant funding through the Office of the Arts.**

The NW CT Arts Council recently conducted a region-wide cultural assessment survey and it was made clear by the 600 respondents from ALL sectors (culture, business, education, government, media and general public) that culture needed more support and that such support was a valued investment in the community. Although this support must come from all sectors, **government fundig is more important than ever, because it leverages private support.**

**Imagine what is lost** with reductions to arts funding - the doors closing, the vanished jobs, and the diminished opportunities for growth and enrichment. **Then imagine the opposite** – more funding that moves the creative sector closer to realizing its full potential for our State's economic and cultural health.

I ask that you **reinstate state funding at the \$2 million budget allocation for the State's CT Office of the Arts grant program and begin once again to contribute to the State's Arts Endowment annually.**

Sincerely,

Amy Wynn, Executive Director  
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